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the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statue of St. Brendan.¹ Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wren-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 178 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432 ●

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

¹ It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle. [885] [538]

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.¹ 437 443 432● [558]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this 443 [439]

¹P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.